

Message Text

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42

ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY QUITO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7655

INFO AMCONSUL GUAYAQUIL

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C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 7694

E.O. 11652: GDS

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SUBJECT: POLITICAL SPECULATION AND POLEMICS SUBSIDE FOLLOWING
PRESIDENTIAL DECREE 838

REF: A) QUITO 7488 B) QUITO 7560

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: PRESS COVERAGE OF BANISHMENT OF ALLEGED PARTICIPANTS HAS DECREASED MARKEDLY AND CRITICISM OF THE REGIME'S HANDLING OF THE CONSEJO EXTRAORDINARIO DE GUERRA HAS BEEN MUTED. THE THREE CIVILIANS ARRESTED IN CONNECTION WITH THE COUP ARE STILL BEING HELD AND THERE HAS BEEN NO OFFICIAL COMMENT ABOUT THEIR DETENTION. "SPECIAL DEFENDER" GENERAL ORELLANA HAS LEFT THE ASYLUM OF THE COLOMBIAN EMBASSY WHILE GENERAL ESPINOSA'S WHEREABOUTS ARE STILL UNKNOWN. THE CABINET ISSUED A DECLARATION OF SUPPORT OF THE GOVERNMENT'S PRESIDENTIAL DECREE 838 BANISHING CERTAIN OFFICERS WHILE REMOVING OTHERS FROM THE ARMED FORCES. THE MOST CONTROVERSIAL COUP-RELATED STORY STILL RECEIVING SIGNIFICANT PRESS COVERAGE CONCERNS ACCUSATIONS THAT PRESIDENT RODRIGUEZ HAD AGREED TO ANNOUNCE A DATE FOR THE RETURN TO CIVILIAN GOVERNMENT IN RETURN FOR MILITARY SUPPORT AGAINST THE REBELLIOUS OFFICERS. END SUMMARY.

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2. SINCE ISSUANCE OF PRESIDENTIAL DECREE 838, MEDIA

COVERAGE OF COUP-RELATED SUBJECTS HAS DECREASED SIGNIFICANTLY AND THE EARLIER STRONG PRESS CRITICISM OF THE REGIME'S HANDLING OF THE TRIAL OF THE ACCUSED COUP PLOTTERS HAS BEEN MUTED. EXPRESO PUBLISHED A COMMENT THAT THE PUBLISHER OF EL TIEMPO, THE PAPER MOST CRITICAL OF THE GOE'S HANDLING OF THE TRIAL, WAS CALLED INTO THE MINISTRY OF GOVERNMENT'S OFFICE. WHATEVER THE CASE, TIEMPO'S HANDLING OF COUP-RELATED STORIES IS MUCH Milder THAN BEFORE.

3. JOSE VICENTE ORTUNO, FRANCISCO ACOSTA YEPEZ AND HUGO TREVION TULIVEN, THE CIVILIANS ARRESTED FOR APPARENTLY COUP-RELATED OFFENSES, ARE STILL BEING HELD AND THERE HAS BEEN NO OFFICIAL COMMENT ABOUT THEIR CASES. RUMORS INDICATE THAT ONE OR MORE MAY SOON BE BANISHED TO ANOTHER COUNTRY.

4. ON THE PUBLICATION OF GOE ASSURANCES THAT THERE WERE NO ARREST ORDERS FOR "SPECIAL DEFENDERS" GENERALS ORELLANA AND ESPINOSA, ORELLANA LEFT THE COLOMBIAN EMBASSY WHERE HE HAD SOUGHT ASYLUM; THE WHEREABOUT OF GENERAL ESPINOSA ARE STILL NOT KNOWN.

5. THE CABINET HAS ISSUED A DECLARATION SUPPORTING THE ACTION DECREED BY THE GOE TO PUNISH PARTICIPANTS IN THE COUP AND REAFFIRMING SUPPORT OF GENERAL RODRIGUEZ. THE DECLARATION LAUDS THE ABILITY WITH WHICH RODRIGUEZ DIRECTS THE COUNTRY AND EXPRESSES CONFIDENCE THAT HE "WILL SEE TO THE REALIZATION OF THE TRUE POLITICAL AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHANGES PROPOSED BY THE GOVERNMENT'S PHILOSOPHY AND PLAN OF ACTION."

6. THE GREATEST COUP-RELATED CONTROVERSY CURRENTLY APPEARING IN THE PRESS CONCERNS ACCUSATIONS MADE BY LT. COL. ROBERTO CASTRO THAT ON AUGUST 31 RODRIGUEZ AGREED TO ANNOUNCE A DATE FOR THE RETURN TO CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT IN EXCHANGE FOR THE SUPPORT OF THE GALAPAGOS ARMORED BRIGADE STATIONED AT RIOBAMBA. THE CHARGE HAS BEEN DENIED IN A STRONGLY WORDED PRESS STATEMENT BY GENERAL GUILLERMO DURAN, COMMANDER OF THE ARMY, AS WELL AS BY THE COMMANDER OF THE GALAPAGOS BRIGADE, IN PAID ADVERTISEMENTS IN QUITO NEWSPAPERS.

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7. COMMENT: THE DECREASE IN PITCH AND VOLUME OF RUMORS ABOUT THE LONGEVITY OF THE RODRIGUEZ GOVERNMENT, AND Milder PRESS TREATMENT OF THE GOVERNMENT DO NOT MEAN THAT THE POLITICALLY-ACTIVE PUBLIC'S INTEREST IN THE SUBJECTS HAS DECLINED OR THAT RODRIGUEZ "DEPORTATION" ACTION HAS NECESSARILY STRENGTHENED HIS POSITION WITHIN THE ARMED FORCES. RUMORS CONTINUE REGARDING THE SUPPOSED IMMINENT DEMISE OF THE RODRIGUEZ

GOVERNMENT, BUT AT A LESS INTENSE LEVEL. WE SENSE A WEARINESS
WITH THE CONSTANT PREOCCUPATION OVER THE STRENGTH OF THE
RODRIGUEZ GOVERNMENT THAT HAS PREVAILED DURING THE
PAST FEW WEEKS, AND BELIEVE THAT PUBLIC CONCENTRATION ON THE
MATTER MAY BE SUBSIDING FOR THE TIME BEING.
BREWSTER

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